

Washington, DC - Today, Congressmen Ben Ray Luján, Martin Heinrich and Harry Teague sent a letter to Congressional leadership in advance of the conference on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The letter urges House and Senate leadership to include the House-passed education figures in the final conference report. The House version of the bill included significant support to local school districts for school construction, Title 1-A and IDEA - programs that will benefit students and help get our economy back on track. The Senate passed their version of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act today by a vote of 61 to 37.

"The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act should create jobs immediately and prepare our children for jobs of the future," said Luján. "Education measures in the House version achieved both of these goals through an investment in school modernization, repair and renovation projects, and funding to protect key education programs. School construction puts people back to work and funding to states to prevent education cuts keeps teachers in the classroom where they are able to prepare young people for the jobs of the future. As the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan moves to conference, I am proud to join with my colleagues to urge leadership to maintain support for education and school construction."

"With New Mexico facing a \$454 million budget shortfall, the need for a comprehensive recovery package that addresses our education needs is critical. Our local schools and governments should not have to make the choice between service cuts or higher taxes," said Congressman Harry Teague. "A comprehensive recovery package that includes immediate investments in education will not only help New Mexico save and create critical jobs but strategic investments in education will help New Mexico become stronger, more productive and competitive."

"In order to turn this economy around as quickly as possible, we need to ensure that we are making a substantial and immediate investment in our education system," said Rep. Heinrich. "The education funding I voted for in the House-passed version of the recovery package will save existing jobs and create new jobs by hiring new teachers, and investing in school construction and renovation."

The House passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act last week. The House version of the legislation included \$329 million to New Mexico for K-12 education and over \$39 million to New Mexico for higher education modernization, renovation, and repair. It also included \$419 million to New Mexico for the state fiscal stabilization fund, which could prevent cuts in the state education budget. The Senate compromise removed \$16 billion school construction, \$40 billion for the state fiscal stabilization fund, and all of the funding for higher education modernization, renovation, and repair.

**FULL TEXT OF LETTER:**

February 10, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi The Honorable Harry Reid  
Office of the Speaker Office of the Senate Majority Leader  
H-232, US Capitol 528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Office of the House Minority Leader Office of the Senate Minority Leader  
H-204 The Capitol 361-A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Reid, Minority Leader Boehner, and Minority Leader McConnell:

As you enter into conference on the economic recovery and reinvestment plan, we urge you to include the House-passed education figures in the final conference report. As Members of Congress from the great state of New Mexico, when we voted on H.R. 1, we supported an economic recovery and reinvestment plan that addressed many of our state's critical needs, particularly education. We are concerned that the Senate version of the package cuts critical education funding and jeopardizes a critical component to our economic recovery.

Education is not only how our country will be prepared for the economic realities of tomorrow, education is what can help get our economy back on track today. School construction and modernization creates jobs now, putting more people back to work. When more young people and adults are able to attend college because of an increase in the Pell grant, schools benefit and teachers' jobs are protected. Investment in education helps our economy now.

Moreover, education investment helps strengthen our economy well into the future. Students trained today for the jobs of tomorrow means less unemployment moving forward. It means our young people can be ready with the relevant skills needed to find and keep a job in a competitive market. Education helps break the cycle of poverty over the long term. It is through supporting our schools, our teachers, and our students that any short-term economic investment will remain impactful for years to come.

We all want our children to be able to learn in an environment that is safe, accessible, and relevant to the ever-changing times. However, we emphasize that while promoting education in and of itself is a laudable goal-it is also a key part of our economic recovery. We strongly urge you to maintain support for education in the economic recovery and reinvestment plan for the sake of New Mexico and our nation. We thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ben Ray Luján  
Member of Congress

Martin Heinrich  
Member of Congress

Harry Teague  
Member of Congress

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